



SONG BIRDS AND WATER FOWL



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SONG BIRDS AND WATER FOWL

BOOKS BY H. E. PARKHURST

SONG BIRDS AND WATERFOWL. Illustrated by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. 12mo, net, \$1.50

THE BIRDS' CALENDAR. With 24 Illustrations. 12mo, net, 1.50



BOBOLINKS

An intoxicated bobolink, madly singing in his wild career (p. 187).

~~8150~~ web

SONG BIRDS AND WATER FOWL

BY
H. E. PARKHURST

AUTHOR OF THE "BIRDS' CALENDAR"

"This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled."
Shakespeare

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1897

Birds

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*The artist wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the authorities of the American Museum for many courtesies.

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A Bouquet of Song Birds

“ Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe floures how they springe:
Ful is myn hert of revel and solas.”

Chaucer.

A BOUQUET OF SONG BIRDS



NE of the most famous resorts of land-birds in the Eastern States is in the town of Englewood, N. J. ; to be precise, West Englewood, a small farming district at some distance from Englewood itself. But let no one, meditating a trip to this avian shrine, be misled, as I nearly was, by an unscrupulous ticket-agent of the New Jersey Northern Railroad, who tried to persuade me that all of Englewood worth mentioning was on *his* road—a statement fully two miles wide of the truth, for West Englewood is on the West Shore road. The circumstance that makes this an attractive spot to the feathered tribe is its variety of topography, and, consequently, of vegetable and animal life ; for, within a small area, are comprised upland and swamp, woods, shrubbery, and open land—quite an epitome of nature—with such diversity of growth as to allure the varied tastes of a wide range of species. In contrast with the Ramble

Song Birds and Water Fowl

of Central Park in New York City, this spot, though so accessible and provided with several intersecting roads, is yet so wild and secluded as to retain a large number of its migrant spring visitors through the summer ; and thus affords favorable opportunities for studying their more interesting aspects of song and nidification.

About the middle of May one always finds here not only a remarkable variety of species, representative of all our land-birds, but an immense number of specimens of all the various sorts. Leaving the train at Hackensack, two miles south of Englewood, and inquiring for the road leading thither of a gentleman who thought it preposterous that I should wish to walk, when I could just as well have ridden—thus betraying the fact that he was not a naturalist—I at once found myself in the midst of a company of clear-voiced field-sparrows. Simple and artless as it is, nothing in the range of music could have expressed more happily the spirit of peace pervading the pastoral scene to which I had come, with the harsh rattle of city pavements as yet hardly out of my ears.

Pretention is as far from the heart of any sparrow as the east is from the west ; but, in this respect, perhaps the bashful little field-spar-

A Bouquet of Song Birds

row beats them all ; for he is the very embodiment of modesty. Sometimes he mounts a little way up a tree, and delivers his apologetic little message ; but often he is too humble even to do that, and will stand on the ground, throw up his tiny red bill, and pour forth his mild and sweet salute. The note of the field-sparrow is like a pleasant word dropped in the morning, that dissolves into a faint radiance for the entire day. It would be incongruous to greet its simple melody with boisterous praise ; there are some deeds for whose performance silence is the best applause. The song of this bird is much like that of the vesper-sparrow—three or four detached notes followed by a rippling sound, like the melodious drops of a broken stream of water ; but not so loud, rich, and assertive as in the vesper-sparrow. However, if the softer-voiced field-sparrow lives and overcomes his modesty, he will become quite as pleasing a singer as his better known and more confident brother—who, by the way, sings all through the day, and not merely at evening, as a well-known writer has mistakenly asserted. While almost all sparrows prefer the more open places to the deeper woods, this is emphatically true of field and vesper sparrows, that are par-